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March 15, 1978

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Honorable Cyrus R. Vance
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Vance,

As you know, Congress may soon be considering the proposed arms sales to middle eastern countries.

Debate on this matter has been lively; many questions have been raised, and many have been answered. There is one important question that has not been raised, and I would like to pose it to you. Has the Administration assessed the likelihood of these nations, Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, purchasing similar arms from other countries, should the U.S. decide not to complete the sale?

Since the President has indicated the "package" nature of the sales, there has been speculation that Israel would favor sale of the entire package, over the alternative; that none of the countries receives this U.S. assistance. I am wondering if this might not result from their belief that Egypt and Saudi Arabia can purchase these arms from other countries, while we are the only nation that will sell to Israel.

Some parties have interpreted Israel's perceived acceptance of the package as evidence that the new Saudi and Egyptian weaponry would not pose a threat to Israeli security. Is there the possibility that this is due instead to Israel's realization that their neighboring nations will receive similar arms elsewhere in the world market, while the U.S. constitutes Israel's only potential source of sophisticated weaponry?

Sincerely,

Glenn M. Anderson

GLENN M. ANDERSON
Member of Congress

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